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United Nations 2018 flagship report on disability and development: realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note provides an overview of the United Nations 2018 flagship report on disability and development and the preliminary findings described in the report. The full report, requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/142, will be issued online on 3 December 2018.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 69/142, entitled "Realizing the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in coordination with all relevant United Nations entities, to compile and analyse national policies, programmes, best practices and available statistics regarding persons with disabilities, reflecting progress made in addressing the relevant internationally agreed development goals and the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to be submitted to the General Assembly in a flagship report during 2018. The 2018 flagship report on disability and development and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities will be issued in response to that mandate.

2. The purpose of the report is to contribute to the full and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and enhance the current efforts to mainstream the needs, rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities into the process of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals at all levels. In particular, the report provides an overview of overall progress towards the Goals and the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and presents good practices and policy trends in the respective areas. It will be the first publication on disability and the Goals at the global level. The following Goals are addressed in detail: poverty and hunger (Goals 1 and 2), social protection (target 1.3), health and well-being (Goal 3), education (Goal 4), gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities (Goal 5), availability of water and sanitation (Goal 6), access to energy (Goal 7), employment and decent work (Goal 8), access to information and communications technology (ICT) (target 9.c), inequality (Goal 10), inclusive cities and human settlements (Goal 11), inclusive societies and institutions, representative decision-making and access to justice and to information (Goal 16) and strengthening the means of implementation (Goal 17).

3. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat collaborated with experts from United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, Member States, academia, research institutions, foundations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, especially organizations of persons with disabilities, to produce the report. Five expert group meetings were organized to contribute to the preparation of the report. Various sources of evidence, repositories of national and best practices and numerous disability data sets were compiled and analysed, including those of the Demographic and Health Surveys,[1] the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Eurostat, the International Labour Organization (ILO), Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International,[2] SINTEF,[3] the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

[1] ICF International, Demographic and Health Surveys, various data sets from 2009 to 2015.

[2] Minnesota Population Center, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International, various data sets from 2001 to 2012. Data available at https://international.ipums.org/international/.

[3] SINTEF, studies on living conditions among persons with disabilities, various data sets from 2004 to 2015.

4. The present note focuses on selected Sustainable Development Goals and provides an overview of the preliminary findings of the report. The note ends with a discussion of the way forward for disability-inclusive sustainable development.

II. Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities

5. In 2015, Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030. Disability has been included in various targets and as a cross-cutting issue in the Agenda. Efforts need to be stepped up to ensure that the goals and targets will be achieved for persons with disabilities too, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was adopted in 2007 and as of June 2018 has been ratified by 177 States.

6. The sections below provide an overview of selected Sustainable Development Goals from a disability perspective; they address relevant international normative frameworks, the current situation of persons with disabilities, national policy trends and good practices, with the aim of informing on progress made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities.

A. Ending poverty and hunger for all persons with disabilities (Goals 1 and 2)

7. The eradication of poverty and hunger represents key commitments under Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2. Poverty is also a concern under article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in which States parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families and commit to ensuring access by persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities and older persons with disabilities, to social protection programmes and poverty reduction programmes.

8. However, persons with disabilities and their households are still more likely to live in poverty owing to various barriers in society, such as discrimination, limited access to education and employment and a lack of participation in livelihood and other social programmes. Increased expenditures related to disability could exacerbate the situation. Based on data from 22 countries around 2008, multidimensional poverty rates[4] for persons with disabilities were on average 15 percentage points higher than those of persons without disabilities.[5, 6, 7, 8, 9] Data on income poverty disaggregated by disability are lacking in many countries, but studies conducted among eight countries from 2010 to 2015 showed that the proportion of

[4] Multidimensional poverty refers to the experience of multiple deprivations in different domains, such as educational attainment, employment and living conditions.

[5] Debra L. Brucker and others, "More likely to be poor whatever the measure: working-age persons with disabilities in the United States", *Social Science Quarterly*, vol. 96, No. 1 (2014), pp. 273–296.

[6] Sophie Mitra, Aleksandra Posarac and Brandon Vick, "Disability and poverty in developing countries: a multidimensional study", *World Development*, vol. 41 (2013), pp. 1–18.

[7] Sophie Mitra, *Disability, Health and Human Development* (New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2018).

[8] Jean-Francois Trani and others, "Disability and poverty in Morocco and Tunisia: a multidimensional approach", *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, vol. 16, No. 4 (2015).

[9] Jean-Francois Trani and others, "Multidimensional poverty in Afghanistan: who are the poorest of the poor?", *Oxford Development Studies*, vol. 44, No. 2 (2016), pp. 220–245.

persons with disabilities living under the national or international poverty line was higher than that of persons without disabilities. The gap reached 20 percentage points in some countries.[5,7,10]

9. Besides experiencing higher poverty rates, persons with disabilities are more likely to live in food-insecure households. The inability to afford a meal with protein every second day is higher among persons with disabilities than among persons without disabilities. Among 35 countries[11] in 2016, the average percentage of persons with disabilities who were unable to afford such a meal was almost double that of persons without disabilities: 17 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively. More women than men with disabilities face this challenge, and the gender gap between women and men is wider among persons with disabilities.[12]

10. Social protection schemes help to prevent, manage and overcome situations that adversely affect a person's well-being. Since the 1960s, an increasing number of countries have adopted social protection programmes for persons with disabilities, reaching 179 countries in 2012 and 2013. In 168 countries, disability schemes provide periodic cash benefits to persons with disabilities, while in another 11 countries, only lump-sum benefits are provided. In 81 countries, benefits cover mainly workers and their families in the formal economy and thus leave out children with disabilities and persons with disabilities who did not have the opportunity to contribute to social insurance long enough to be eligible for benefits. A total of 87 countries use schemes that are fully or partially financed through taxes and thus have improved coverage. In 27 countries, schemes cover all persons with assessed disabilities without regard to their income status; in 60 countries, they protect only persons or households whose economic means fall below a certain threshold. Apart from the challenges posed by these conditionalities, access to social protection programmes can be restricted by other barriers,[13] such as lack of knowledge on how to apply for benefits, absence of documentation, limited accessibility of grant offices for persons with disabilities, lack of clarity in the disability evaluation process and discrimination by staff of grant offices towards certain types of disabilities, particularly intellectual disabilities.[14]

11. Financial inclusion can contribute to giving persons with disabilities access to economic opportunities and helping them to escape poverty. However, persons with disabilities report difficulties in using financial services independently owing to accessibility constraints. In five developing countries, on average 37 per cent of persons with disabilities consider banks inaccessible.[3] Crowdsourced data mostly from developed countries indicated that, in 2017, 28 per cent of banks and 12 per cent of automated teller machines were not accessible.[15,16]

B. Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being (Goal 3)

12. Sustainable Development Goal 3 calls for ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all. The achievement of the Goal for persons with disabilities builds

[10] ESCAP, *Building Disability-inclusive Societies in Asia and the Pacific: Assessing Progress of the Incheon Strategy* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.18.II.F.4).

[11] Of the 35 countries, 34 are in Europe.

[12] Eurostat database (accessed from March to May 2018).

[13] ILO, *World Social Protection Report* 2014/15: *Building Economic Recovery, Inclusive Development and Social Justice* (Geneva, 2014).

[14] Lauren Graham, Jacqueline Moodley and Lisa Selipsky, "The disability-poverty nexus and the case for a capabilities approach: evidence from Johannesburg, South Africa", *Disability and Society*, vol. 28, No. 3 (2013), pp. 324–337.

[15] Sozialhelden, accessibility.cloud. Available at www.accessibility.cloud (accessed in December 2017).

[16] Based on data from over 9,000 banks and over 20,000 automated teller machines.

on various international frameworks responding to the need to secure access to health-care services for persons with disabilities. This includes the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 25 of which stipulates providing the same quality and standard of affordable health-care services and programmes to persons with disabilities as provided to other persons, and article 26 stipulates strengthening comprehensive habilitation and rehabilitation services and programmes.

13. Persons with disabilities are at greater risk of developing secondary health conditions such as depression, pain and osteoporosis[17] and are faced with more challenges to gaining access to health care. Thus, they are more likely to have poor health than others. In 38 countries, in 2015 and 2016, health was self-perceived as very good or good by an average of 20 per cent of persons with disabilities, compared with 82 per cent of persons without disabilities. Moreover, 38 per cent of persons with disabilities perceived their health as bad or very bad, compared with 2 per cent of persons without disabilities. Women with disabilities tended to report poorer health than men with disabilities. The lower the gross domestic product per capita of a country, the higher the proportion of persons with disabilities who reported poor health.[12,18,19] Regarding tobacco use, data from 15 European countries suggest that daily tobacco use is less of a problem among persons with disabilities (19 per cent of persons with disabilities reported smoking daily, compared with 26 per cent of persons without disabilities).[12]

14. Access to health-care services remains a challenge for persons with disabilities, who are more than three times as likely as persons without disabilities to be unable to get health care when they need it. Barriers include lack of financial resources and inaccessible public transport and facilities.[12,18,20] In some developing countries, more than 30 per cent of persons with disabilities report that hospitals and primary health-care facilities are not accessible.[3]

15. To address those challenges, countries have tended to make legal and policy reforms and/or to address access to health-care services directly. Based on a review of national laws and policies,[21] six basic approaches can be identified: (a) constitutional or human rights act provisions of general application regarding disability; (b) anti-discrimination laws and regulations of general application; (c) anti-discrimination laws and regulations with reference to the health sector; (d) national, non-constitutional laws targeting provision of and access to health care; (e) national disability laws or policy plans; and (f) laws guaranteeing access to health care for specific health conditions, such as spinal cord injuries, or specific populations, such as veterans. Although approaches (a), (b) and (c) are very common, they do not explicitly target any disability-specific barriers; at best, they give a person with disabilities the option of launching legal action against the State. Approaches (e) and (f) are common, but only six countries use approach (d) and have a law guaranteeing access to health care for persons with disabilities.

[17] WHO and World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (2011).

[18] Model disability surveys in Cameroon, Chile and Sri Lanka, 2015–2016. Data provided by WHO in April 2018.

[19] World Bank data. Available at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD (accessed in May 2018).

[20] Based on data from 37 countries.

[21] Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, "International laws". Available at https://dredf.org/legal-advocacy/international-disability-rights/international-laws/4 (accessed in August 2017).

C. Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education (Goal 4)

16. Education is considered a fundamental human right and a condition necessary to enhancing individual development and effective participation in society. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that everyone has the right to education (art. 26). This guarantee was strengthened following the adoption of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the first legally binding international instrument outlining core elements of the right to education. In article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, States parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education, and, in article 9 thereof, they commit to ensuring the elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility in schools. Sustainable Development Goal 4 calls for ensuring inclusive quality education for all, and targets 4.5 and 4.a include ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for persons with disabilities and building and upgrading disability-sensitive education facilities, respectively.

17. Persons with disabilities are less likely to attend school and complete primary education and more likely to be illiterate. Around 2010, on average, only 77 per cent of persons with disabilities aged 15 to 29 had ever attended school, compared with 87 per cent of persons without disabilities of the same age.[2,22,23] Data from six developing countries indicated that on average one in three children with disabilities of primary school age was out of school, compared with one in seven children without disabilities. In these same countries, the primary school completion rate was 56 per cent for children with disabilities and 73 per cent for children without disabilities.[1] The average literacy rate of persons with disabilities who are 15 years and older is 56 per cent, against 74 per cent for persons without disabilities.[2,24]

18. Many countries made efforts to strengthen national legal frameworks and devise policies to ensure improved access to education for persons with disabilities. Of the 193 Member States, 34 guarantee in their constitutions the right to education for persons with disabilities or provide protection against discrimination based on disability in education. In terms of inclusive education, around 2013, students with disabilities could be taught in the same classroom as other students in only 44 per cent of Member States. In 39 per cent of the countries, students with disabilities may attend the same schools but not necessarily be in the same classrooms as other students; in 12 per cent of the countries, students with disabilities are sent to separate schools, and in 5 per cent of the countries, children with disabilities receive no additional support in public education to meet their needs.[25] Progress has, however, been made in recent years and, as at 2017, an increased number of countries provided appropriate materials (41 per cent of countries), adequate human resources (33 per cent of countries) and physical environments (33 per cent of countries) for students with disabilities in schools.[26] Out of more than 30,000 education facilities analysed in various countries (mostly developed countries), only 47 per cent were considered accessible for persons using wheelchairs.[15]

19. Other practical measures adopted by countries to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities include free and compulsory education for students with

[22] School-to-work transition surveys, 2012–2016. Data provided by UNESCO.

[23] Based on data from 37 countries and territories from developing regions, 2006–2015.

[24] Based on data from 25 countries, 2005–2011.

[25] World Policy Analysis Center, Disability Data. Available at www.worldpolicycenter.org/maps-data/data-download/disability-data (accessed in October 2017).

[26] Data from 80 countries provided by UNICEF in 2017.

disabilities,[27] financial assistance,[28] providing Braille textbooks, allowing extra time for entrance exams, assignment of assistant teachers,[29] training teachers to enhance their understanding and teaching methods on inclusive education[30] and educating students without disabilities about disability.[31]

D. Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls with disabilities (Goal 5)

20. Sustainable Development Goal 5 calls for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The need to incorporate a gender perspective into all efforts to promote the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities is emphasized in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention includes, as one of its general principles, the need to ensure equality between women and men, and a stand-alone article (art. 6) on women with disabilities. Women with disabilities are also protected by normative frameworks safeguarding and advancing the rights of women, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, in 1995. While the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women does not make explicit reference to women and girls with disabilities, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action identify actions to ensure the empowerment of women with disabilities in various areas, including equal access to appropriate education and skills training, health programmes and services that address the special needs of women with disabilities, improvement of their work opportunities, equity and positive action programmes to address systemic discrimination against women with disabilities in the labour force, and improvement of concepts and methods of data collection on the participation of women and men with disabilities, including their access to resources.

21. Women with disabilities are often subjected to multiple forms of discrimination, owing to their gender and disability status, and continue to be at a disadvantage in most spheres of society and development. Compared with men without disabilities, women with disabilities are: three times more likely to have unmet health-care needs;[12,18,32] two times more likely to be unemployed or inactive in the labour market;[2,12,33,34] three times more likely to be illiterate;[2,35] and four times less[36] likely to work as legislators, senior officials or managers.[2,37] There is also evidence indicating that women with disabilities are four times more likely to suffer sexual violence.[38] With regard to early marriage, girls with and without disabilities tend to

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[27] Kye-Ok Kim, "Inclusive education in the Republic of Korea", paper for the Regional Preparatory Workshop on Inclusive Education, East Asia, Hangzhou, China, 3–5 November 2007.

[28] UNESCO, *The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities: Overview of the Measures Supporting the Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities Reported by Member States* (Paris, 2015).

[29] Inclusive Education in Action, "Providing Braille materials to support inclusion in Japan".

[30] Inclusive Education in Action, "Cooperative teaching for inclusion". Available at www.inclusive-education-in-action.org/iea/index.php?menuid=25&reporeid=173.

[31] Inclusive Education in Action, "Exploring the use of 'Kids on the Block' puppet programmes to raise awareness of autism and deafness in primary schools".

[32] Based on data from 37 countries.

[33] ILO disability database. Data provided by ILO, 2017–2018.

[34] Based on data from 66 countries.

[35] Based on data from 37 countries provided by UNESCO.

[36] ESCWA, "Arab disability statistics in numbers 2017". Available at www.unescwa.org/sub-site/arab-disability-statistics-2017 (accessed in May 2018).

[37] Based on data from 10 countries.

[38] Uganda Demographic and Health Survey, 2016.

be similarly affected, with girls with disabilities slightly less likely to be married before age 15 in 11 out of 15 countries.[2]

22. With respect to disability-inclusive gender policies, an analysis of the national plans of 20 countries to address gender inequalities and/or violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean indicated that 17 of the 20 countries mentioned disability in their gender national plans, 12 had gender plans with measures targeting women with disabilities and only 6 out of 19 countries addressed gender in their disability laws.[39]

E. Ensuring availability of water and sanitation (Goal 6)

23. Under Sustainable Development Goal 6, States commit to achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all. The need to pay attention to people in vulnerable situations, implying the inclusion of persons with disabilities, is underscored in target 6.2. In article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, States parties commit to ensuring equal access to clean water services for persons with disabilities. Similarly, access to water and sanitation services and the equal rights of persons with disabilities are mentioned in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020.[40]

24. Accessibility and inclusive design are increasingly becoming the norm in many countries, but persons with disabilities, particularly those living in developing countries, face barriers in access to water, sanitation and hygiene, including physical, institutional, social and attitudinal barriers.[41] For example, in Chile and Sri Lanka, approximately one out of five persons with a severe disability considers the toilet hindering or very hindering. In Cameroon, about every second person with a severe disability considers the toilet hindering or very hindering.[18] In Brazil, in 2016, 97 per cent of primary schools had a toilet in the building but, despite considerable progress since 2009, only 46 per cent had a sanitation facility accessible to pupils with disabilities or reduced mobility.[42] Moreover, persons with disabilities are less likely to live in households with access to improved water and sanitation. In some countries, the gap between households of persons with and those without disabilities is over 10 percentage points in terms of access to both improved water and sanitation.[43]

25. Assistive technologies, such as specially designed handles for water pumps or toilets, installing ramps and handrails and widening doors that are designed for persons with disabilities, help in making water, sanitation and hygiene accessible. For instance, in Mali, a communal well in a village was redesigned, in consultation with persons with disabilities, to include a high wall to protect persons who are blind from falling, and a physical support was installed for lifting water. One section of the wall was lowered and a concrete ramp was developed for wheelchair users.[41] In Nepal, moveable toilet seats were provided to rural households that had latrines, which

[39] Maria Veronica Reina, "Regional trends: women with disabilities in Latin America", presentation at the expert group meeting on advancing the rights and perspectives of women and girls with disabilities in development and society, Santiago, 15–17 November 2016.

[40] A/CONF.219/7, chap. II, para. 87 (1) (c).

[41] Hazel Jones, Julie Fisher and Robert Reed, "Water and sanitation for all in low-income countries", Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers, *Municipal Engineer*, vol. 165, No. ME3 (September 2012), pp. 167–174.

[42] WHO/UNICEF, Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene, analysis based on data from the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research of Brazil, 2000–2016.

[43] Based on data for 34 countries from the World Health Survey, 2002–2004.

helped persons with disabilities having leg and/or back problems, and reduced the need to sit or crawl on a wet latrine floor.[44]

F. Ensuring access to energy (Goal 7)

26. Access to energy has long been discussed in the context of sustainable development and the well-being of individuals, but persons with disabilities have been invisible in the discourse. The call for energy access for all, which implicitly includes persons with disabilities, was made in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", as well as in Goal 7, in which the critical role that energy plays in the development process is recognized. Access to energy is vital for persons with disabilities, many of whom require electricity to operate assistive technology for independent living. Out of the 50 priority assistive products identified by WHO,[45] almost half require electricity. In many developing countries, households with persons with disabilities are less likely to have access to electricity than those without persons with disabilities. In several countries, less than 20 per cent of households with persons with disabilities have access. The gap in energy access between the two types of households can reach 10 percentage points or more in some countries and is wider in countries with less than 70 per cent electricity access.[1,3,18,2,46] In countries facing low winter temperatures, in 2015 and 2016, persons with disabilities were less likely to be able to keep their homes warm, especially women with disabilities. In some countries, this affects more than 30 per cent of persons with disabilities.[12,47]

27. Affordability and exposure to indoor pollution from non-clean energy sources are also particular challenges for persons with disabilities. Longer periods spent at home and the use of electricity-dependent assistive technology can lead to higher electricity consumption, which results in higher energy bills, and persons with disabilities have more difficulties in paying energy bills because of lower income (see Goal 8). Since persons with disabilities tend to spend longer periods at home, they are more likely to be exposed to indoor pollution from traditional fuels, such as biomass and coal. Access to reliable, affordable and clean energy is therefore crucial for the well-being of persons with disabilities.

28. Some Member States are addressing these challenges by providing financial support for energy bills and enhancing access to clean energy. For example, in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Government provides financial support to persons with disabilities for adjusting room temperature in winter and summer.[48,49] In a refugee camp in Kenya, energy-efficient stoves were distributed, with the selection of beneficiaries focusing on persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.[50]

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[44] Guna Raj Shrestha, "Case study on addressing sanitation needs of disabled people in Nepal", Nepal Water for Health, January 2006.

[45] WHO, "Priority Assistive Products List". Available at: www.who.int/phi/implementation/assistive_technology/global_survey-api/en/.

[46] Based on data from 44 countries.

[47] Based on data from 35 countries.

[48] United Kingdom, "Cold weather payment". Available at www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment/eligibility.

[49] United Kingdom, "Warm home discount scheme". Available at www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/eligibility.

[50] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Dadaab refugee camps, Kenya: solar energy and energy efficiency", September 2014.

G. Promoting full and productive employment and decent work for persons with disabilities (Goal 8)

29. Sustainable Development Goal 8 calls for promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all. Persons with disabilities are mentioned explicitly in target 8.5 as persons to be included in the goal to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all. Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities calls for the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability in employment and for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value, and safe and healthy working conditions. These provisions are echoed in Human Rights Council resolution 22/3 on the work and employment of persons with disabilities, in which the Council called upon States parties to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy the right to work on an equal basis with others, including by, inter alia, prohibiting discrimination, increasing employment, promoting entrepreneurship, eliminating barriers that hinder job seekers from access to the workplace and ensuring reasonable accommodation.

30. Lower rates of employment are persistently observed for people with disabilities. Based on 91 countries, the employment-to-population ratio of persons with disabilities aged 15 and older is 36 per cent on average, whereas the ratio of persons without disabilities is 60 per cent. The ratio among persons with disabilities varies from 7 per cent to 69 per cent.[2,3,10,12,33,36,51] Women with disabilities are less likely to be employed than men with disabilities, but the average gender gap in the employment-to-population ratio of persons with disabilities aged 15 and older is 11 per cent, compared with 20 per cent for persons without disabilities.[51,52] Employed persons with disabilities tend to earn lower wages than persons without disabilities. Wage gaps wider than 10 per cent have been reported.[53,54,55,56] Lack of accessibility and reasonable accommodation can pose further obstacles. In eight developing countries, an average of 32 per cent of persons with disabilities report that their workplace is hindering or not accessible.[17]

31. An affirmative action measure used frequently by countries to promote the employment of persons with disabilities is a quota system, which obliges employers to hire a certain number or percentage of persons with disabilities. More than 100 countries have established such quota systems, with quota levels mostly varying between 1 per cent and 15 per cent.[57] The most effective quota systems include the payment of a levy by the non-complying company for every position not held by a person with a disability. These levies typically contribute to a special fund used to finance measures promoting the employment of persons with disabilities.

32. Some countries developed national employment policies with a provision for ensuring the right of persons with disabilities to equal employment opportunities.[58] A total of 22 countries have included provisions in their constitutions explicitly guaranteeing the right to work for persons with disabilities or prohibiting employment

[51] Based on data from 2006 to 2016.

[52] Based on data from 66 countries and territories.

[53] Based on data from three countries.

[54] National Statistics Institute of Spain, "El salario de las personas con discapacidad: 2015" (Salary of persons with disabilities: 2015).

[55] United States, Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey Estimates.

[56] Chile, Ministry of Social Development, National Social and Economic Survey 2015. Available at http://observatorio.ministeriodesarrollosocial.gob.cl/documentos/Casen2013_inclusion_social.pdf.

[57] Data compiled by ILO and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

[58] ILO, "Inclusion of people with disabilities in national employment policies", September 2015.

discrimination against persons with disabilities.[25] National programmes were launched in some countries to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream technical and vocational education and training systems, such as financial assistance for vocational training and materials and the development of national guidelines for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in such systems.[59,60]

H. Increasing access to information and communications technology (target 9.c)

33. Sustainable Development Goal 9 calls for building resilient infrastructure, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all (target 9.1). The need to increase access to ICT and to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet is underscored in target 9.c. Access for persons with disabilities has been addressed in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in which States parties, in article 9, commit to taking measures to ensure equal access to ICTs and systems for persons with disabilities, including electronic and emergency services. In the International Telecommunication Regulations of 2012, States members of the International Telecommunication Union are called upon to promote access for persons with disabilities to international telecommunication services. These frameworks build on the Geneva Plan of Action, of 2003, and the Tunis Commitment, of 2005, both of which were adopted at the World Summit on the Information Society, in which participants pledge to promote universal, equitable and affordable access to ICTs, including universal design and assistive technologies, for all, including persons with disabilities.

34. Despite these calls and commitments, persons with disabilities remain less likely to have access to ICTs than persons without disabilities. There is a significant gap between persons with and without disabilities in the use of the Internet, with persons with disabilities reporting lower usage. Among 13 developing countries, around 2011, the average gap was 12 percentage points, with some countries reaching gaps as high as 30 percentage points.[1,61,62] These large gaps may be due to the lack of accessibility of such technology as well as the lower capacity of households with persons with disabilities to afford the costs of Internet access. Data available for three sub-Saharan countries indicate that 15 per cent of households without persons with disabilities, but only 8 per cent of households with persons with disabilities, are able to afford Internet costs.[3] Households with persons with disabilities are also less likely to have a computer (11 per cent of households with persons with disabilities, compared with 16 per cent of households without persons with disabilities).[1,2,3,63]

35. Many Member States initiated programmes and policies to promote equal access to ICT for persons with disabilities, which include captioning or signing of television programmes, ensuring accessible government websites, accessible public electronic kiosks or automated teller machine and providing telephone services for persons who are deaf and/or speech impaired.[64] Some Member States have created laws requiring government websites to comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines[65] of the World Wide Web Consortium, and the European Commission has adopted the Web

[59] ILO, *TVET Reform: Designing an Inclusive Skills Development Programme* (2012).

[60] ILO, "Making TVET and skills systems inclusive of persons with disabilities", policy brief, September 2017.

[61] Census data compiled by ECLAC.

[62] Based on data from 13 developing countries.

[63] Based on data from 40 countries.

[64] Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies, "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: 2013 ICT accessibility progress report" (2014).

[65] Available at www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/#for.

Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 as a European government standard.[66] In Latin America and the Caribbean, ICT and persons with disabilities are mentioned in the general disability law in 13 countries and are a provision of the general telecommunication law in 6 countries. Most of this legislation refers to the right of access for persons with disabilities or to ensuring technologies that are in accessible formats.[67]

I. Reducing inequality (Goal 10)

36. Sustainable Development Goal 10 calls for reducing inequality within and among countries. The aim in target 10.2 is to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of disability, while that in target 10.3 is to ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome. Aligning the implementation of Goal 10 with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities would contribute to the effective implementation of the Goal. The general principles of the Convention are particularly relevant in that regard. These principles include non-discrimination (art. 3 (b)), full and effective participation and inclusion in society (art. 3 (c)), respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity (art. 3 (d)) and equality of opportunity (art. 3 (e)).

37. Persistent inequality remains for persons with disabilities. In all areas covered by the Sustainable Development Goals, there are clear gaps between persons with and those without disabilities, with persons with disabilities being systematically at a disadvantage. Although gaps vary from country to country, in some countries the gaps are wide. As presented throughout the flagship report, evidence shows that in some countries the gaps can reach 20 percentage points in income poverty, 30 percentage points in multidimensional poverty, 15 percentage points in the ability to afford a meal with protein every second day, 70 percentage points in experiencing good health, 50 percentage points in literacy rates and 70 percentage points in employment-to-population ratios. Persons with disabilities are also at a disadvantage in gaining access to and affording essential services. In countries where gaps are wider, the gaps reach 15 percentage points in access to improved water and 20 percentage points in access to improved sanitation, 10 percentage points in energy access in the household, 10 percentage points in the use of the Internet and 10 percentage points in the overburden of housing costs.[68] Apart from those gaps, persons with disabilities are also at a disadvantage with regard to representation in decision-making (see sect. K) and political participation. The gap between persons with and without disabilities who have problems voting or engaging in politics is 30 percentage points in some countries.[18]

38. Discrimination is a major cause of exclusion of persons with disabilities. Among six developing countries, 46 per cent of persons with disabilities reported having experienced discrimination; in two of those countries, 17 per cent of persons with disabilities reported being discriminated against in public services.[3] Moreover, although most countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and much progress has been achieved in the past decade in adopting national laws in line with the Convention, discriminatory laws and policies still exist in some countries, particularly in the areas regulating education for persons with disabilities and political participation.

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[66] European Commission, "Web accessibility".

[67] Heidi Ullmann and others, *Information and Communications Technologies for the Inclusion and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Project Documents series, (July 2018).

[68] When the share of housing costs is 30 per cent or more of income.

39. Some groups of persons with disabilities are at an even greater disadvantage than others owing to multiple forms of discrimination. In particular, higher inequalities of outcomes are typically observed for women with disabilities (see sect. D), indigenous persons with disabilities and persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.

J. Making cities and communities inclusive and sustainable for persons with disabilities (Goal 11)

40. Sustainable Development Goal 11 calls for making cities and human settlements inclusive and sustainable, with a focus on ensuring access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services for all (target 11.1). Persons with disabilities are mentioned in target 11.2, which addresses accessible transport systems, and in target 11.7, which addresses accessible public spaces. Similarly, the New Urban Agenda, adopted in 2016, addresses accessible public spaces and transport, as well as the right to adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, access to basic physical and social infrastructure, including affordable serviced land and housing, and the empowerment and participation of persons with disabilities. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities includes the right to live independently and in the community with access to support services, community services and facilities (art. 19) and the right to adequate housing and access to public housing programmes (art. 28). Accessible transportation and public facilities and spaces for persons with disabilities are also emphasized in article 9.

41. In many countries, transportation systems and public spaces are not always accessible for persons with disabilities. Data from eight developing countries indicate that the average proportion of persons with disabilities who consider transportation not accessible or hindering is 36 per cent, ranging from 13 to 48 per cent.[3,17] Crowdsourced data mostly from developed countries indicated that, in 2017, 32 per cent of public transportation facilities were not accessible.[15] Businesses and public places can also be a challenge. In some countries, more than 25 per cent of persons with disabilities consider banks, shops and post offices hindering or not accessible.[3,18] According to crowdsourced accessibility data, out of over 20,000 public leisure facilities analysed in various countries, mostly in developed regions, half were considered not accessible for persons with wheelchairs.[15] Many countries have developed national strategies and/or action plans to address these challenges, including by enhancing the accessibility of public transportation[69, 70] and public playgrounds[71] and by making sidewalks and pedestrian crossings more accessible by removing obstacles and installing ramps and tactile surface markings.[72]

42. Persons with disabilities face several barriers that prevent them from enjoying their right to adequate housing, such as lack of physical accessibility, discrimination and stigmatization and lack of social housing or community support. Limited access to the labour market can also make securing the financial conditions for renting or financing adequate housing a challenge. Persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, in particular, tend to be more vulnerable to forced evictions, harassment and other threats because their legal capacity is often neglected. A disproportionate number of persons with disabilities are homeless. For example, in the United States

[69] See e.g. Australia, National Disability Strategy 2010–2020.

[70] See e.g. Nepal, National Policy and Plan of Action on Disability 2006.

[71] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Best Practices for Including Persons with Disabilities in All Aspects of Development Efforts* (April 2011).

[72] See e.g. the initiative of Sweden on accessible playgrounds and adventure playgrounds. See also Julie Babinard and others, "Accessibility of urban transport for people with disabilities and limited mobility: lessons from East Asia and the Pacific", Transport Notes, TRN-44, April 2012.

of America in 2013, 40 per cent of the population in homeless shelters were persons with disabilities.[73] Those who secure a home can find their dwelling challenging owing to lack of physical accessibility. In some countries, more than 30 per cent of persons with severe disabilities need but do not have modifications to make it easier for them to be at home.[18] Affordability is also an issue. In European countries, 23 per cent of persons with disabilities use one third or more of their income on housing costs.[12]

K. Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (Goal 16)

43. Sustainable Development Goal 16 calls for promoting inclusive societies where all persons, including persons with disabilities, enjoy access to information, justice and accountable public services and participate in public decision-making at all levels. For persons with disabilities, several targets under Goal 16 are critical to ensuring their full inclusion and participation, such as significantly reducing violence and abuse (targets 16.1 and 16.2); promoting the rule of law and ensuring access to justice (target 16.3); developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions (target 16.6); ensuring inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (target 16.7); providing legal identity for all, including birth registration (target 16.9); and ensuring access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms (target 16.10). These targets echo the calls in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for equal recognition before the law (art. 12), access to justice (art. 13) and freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (art. 16).

44. Equal access to justice for all cannot be achieved without equal recognition before the law and the legal protection that guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities. The constitution is the cornerstone of a country's rule of law. Among the 193 Member States, 22 per cent have explicitly guaranteed the rights of persons with disabilities in their constitutions, but 2 per cent, while guaranteeing equal rights, allow for exceptions in cases where disability prevents the exercise of a person's rights.[25] In addition, the lack of accessibility in courts and of legal documents and the lack of disability awareness training for legal officers are ongoing obstacles to enjoying equal access to justice for persons with disabilities. In five developing countries, on average, 30 per cent of persons with disabilities indicated that the courts and police stations were not accessible.[3]

45. To be inclusive and effective, institutions need to be accessible for persons with disabilities. In 15 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, the proportion of accessible government buildings in the national capital varies from 25 to 100 per cent.[10] A 2012 survey indicated that more than 60 per cent of online national governmental portals had features which were not accessible, especially for those with hand mobility and/or visual disabilities.[74] Public sector employment can also promote inclusive and effective institutions. There are more than 90 countries with quota requirements for the employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector, mostly ranging from 1 to 15 per cent.[57] Persons with disabilities tend to be underrepresented in decision-making bodies. In national parliaments, among 21 countries in Asia and the Pacific,

[73] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and United Nations Human Settlements Programme, "The right to adequate housing", Fact Sheet No. 21 (Rev.1) (Geneva, 2015), p. 23.

[74] Data provided by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions.

half had no parliamentarians with disabilities, and in the other half, on average, only 2 per cent of the parliamentarians were persons with disabilities.[10]

46. Access to information is compromised if the media are not accessible. In 11 countries in Asia and the Pacific, the percentage of accessible television news programmes varies from 1 per cent to 100 per cent.[10] A survey of libraries in 28 countries indicated that although 88 per cent were physically accessible, only 49 per cent had a local policy on accessibility and 63 per cent offered accessible resources. Many countries adopt and implement freedom of information acts, which secure access by the public to data and information held by the Government. However, few countries have considered the needs of persons with disabilities, namely with regard to the accessibility of information.

47. Children with disabilities are often not registered because of stigma. Practices vary across countries, but there have been reports of 80 to 90 per cent of children with disabilities not having birth certificates.[75] Evidence also suggests that persons with disabilities are more often victims of violence. Around 2016, in European countries, 13 per cent of persons with disabilities compared with 10 per cent of persons without disabilities indicated that crime, violence and vandalism were common in their accommodation or the area of their residence.[12,76] A recent survey in Uganda indicated that men and women with disabilities suffered physical violence at higher rates (60 per cent) than their peers without disabilities (51 per cent). Men with disabilities were three times more likely to be victims of sexual violence than men without disabilities, and although the difference between women with and those without disabilities was not as large, women with disabilities were the most likely to suffer sexual violence (34 per cent).[38]

L. Increasing the availability of data disaggregated by disability (target 17.18)

48. In Sustainable Development Goal target 17.18, it is recognized that high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated, among others, by disability, are critical to measuring progress and ensuring that no one is left behind. To that end, the target calls for enhancing capacity-building support to developing countries, including for the least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of such data. In that regard, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway addresses the importance of improving the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of data disaggregated by disability in a systemic and coordinated manner at the national level. In article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, States parties undertake to collect appropriate information, including statistical and research data, to enable them to formulate and implement policies to give effect to the Convention and to identify and address barriers faced by persons with disabilities in exercising their rights.

49. At the country level, steady progress has been made in the availability of disability statistics. A case in point is the increasing collection of disability data in censuses. At least 120 out of 214 countries or areas that conducted a census during the 2010 round included a set of questions on disability, a significant increase from the approximately 19 countries or areas that had included such questions during the 1970 census round. Moreover, there has been a clear trend in using internationally recommended methodologies in data collection. Of the 120 countries that asked a

[75] Clair Cody, *Count Every Child: The Right to Birth Registration* (Woking, Plan, 2009).

[76] Based on data from 35 countries.

question on disability in their censuses, 55 used questions similar to those developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics.[77,78]

50. Various United Nations entities have been working on methodologies to improve the quality of disability statistics worldwide. WHO helps countries to collect data on disability and functioning through the model disability survey,[79] a general population survey engaging multi-stakeholders, including persons with disabilities and their organizations. The Washington Group on Disability Statistics developed a short set of disability questions and an extended set of questions on functioning for the identification of persons with disabilities, as well as, in collaboration with UNICEF, a child functioning module to identify children with functional difficulties and an inclusive education module to assess school environment and participation.[77] Furthermore, the Washington Group and ILO are developing a new module on disability and employment for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in labour force surveys. Finally, the Statistics Division is revising the Guidelines and Principles for the Development of Disability Statistics, originally issued in 2001, to enhance the capacities of countries to increase the availability of quality disability data for effectively measuring and monitoring progress for persons with disabilities.

III. The way forward for disability-inclusive sustainable development

51. The evidence provided in the present note demonstrates that persons with disabilities are at a disadvantage regarding most Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, despite the progress observed in laws and policies in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, progress in implementing such measures has been slow. Discriminatory laws are also still in place in many countries. To meet the Goals by 2030, international and national development programmes will need to prioritize inclusive development. In particular, concrete action is needed to make persons with disabilities and their situations visible in policymaking and to build just and inclusive societies.

52. Achieving disability inclusion will require international efforts and effective partnerships, involving Member States, United Nations agencies, humanitarian and human rights actors, development actors, peace and security actors, local communities and organizations of persons with disabilities. They can all play a critical role in ensuring that programmes aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals are disability-inclusive, meaning that all steps in such programmes include the perspectives and consider the needs of persons with disabilities. While there are excellent examples of organizations having disability-inclusive development policies and programmes, many other organizations working on Goal-related programmes lack understanding and awareness of disability issues. In addition, organizations of persons with disabilities should be engaged in efforts to achieve inclusive sustainable development.

53. The fundamental issues causing the exclusion of persons with disabilities need to be urgently addressed: discriminatory laws and policies, lack of accessibility in physical and virtual environments, negative attitudes, stigma and discrimination, lack of access to assistive technology and rehabilitation and lack of measures to promote independent living of persons with disabilities. Removing these barriers requires building capacity in countries. National legislation should ensure general human

[77] Available at www.washingtongroup-disability.com/washington-group-question-sets/.

[78] Records of the Statistics Division.

[79] Available at www.who.int/disabilities/data/mds/en/.

rights protections, either through constitutional, anti-discrimination or other national disability legislation. All national legal and policy frameworks should reflect the rights of persons with disabilities and be aligned with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, namely by eliminating discriminatory legislation and language. Accessibility is best pursued by means of regulations and guidelines at the community level and by thematic area, mandated by national laws and accountability mechanisms. Negative attitudes often result from a misunderstanding of disability and the potential of persons with disabilities as contributors to society. Given their wide outreach, education systems and the media can contribute to effectively combating stereotypes.

54. In many countries, essential services for persons with disabilities lack funding, are of poor quality or are unavailable. Critical financial and other resources should be put in place to enable the implementation of inclusive laws and policies, to deliver essential services, including assistive technology and rehabilitation, and to enable persons with disabilities to live independently. Member States, donor agencies and international organizations should track financial commitments for promoting disability inclusion. Organizations of persons with disabilities also need financial support to engage in advocacy, planning and programming.

55. Although mainstreaming disability into all Sustainable Development Goals will be essential for the achievement of the Goals, there are fundamental areas needing urgent action to catalyse progress, namely access to social protection, education, employment and basic services. When designing and implementing social protection systems, States should ensure a flexible combination of income security and disability-related job support to promote the economic empowerment and employment of persons with disabilities. In education, special education systems for persons with disabilities should be discouraged and educational opportunities within the mainstream system provided instead. Increasing access to health for persons with disabilities will require accessible health services and training of health professionals on ways to adequately care for persons with disabilities. To provide inclusive access to water and sanitation, emphasis on accessible designs, including accessible toilets, water points, water carriers, bathing places and handwashing facilities, is needed.

56. Monitoring and evaluation of progress are also crucial for success in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities. Many relevant global and country indicators are still not disaggregated by disability status. It is therefore necessary for disability disaggregation to become standard in all relevant monitoring systems of Governments and civil society organizations, to inform the development of disability-inclusive national policies and programmes.